

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 2051

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We, the undersigned organizations, request that Congress make funds available for building the capacity of state and local governments and community-based organizations to fully implement the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services expansion in the American Jobs Plan.

Our work in communities across the country has uncovered a critical need to integrate systems that deliver healthcare, housing, and supportive services to our most vulnerable citizens. Integrating systems creates synergies that drive more holistic and person-centered approaches to service delivery. Unfortunately, state and local governments are generally not resourced to develop and deploy the cross-sector partnerships needed to integrate their health and social service systems. Community-based organizations often have the services network, but not the capacity to administer Medicaid activities and effectively support large populations. This leaves people who are cycling between crisis systems and congregate care settings to navigate the complex Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) system on their own. Even when navigator assistance is provided, people may get placed on multiple waitlists for long periods of time before getting access to services (if at all) or may be denied access to HCBS altogether due to outdated and over-restrictive eligibility guidelines. As a result, their medical and supportive service needs may become so severe that institutional care settings are their only option. Also, Medicaid HCBS only covers a subset of services that may be needed in order for someone with complex care issues to thrive in a community setting.

Congress can address the aforementioned issues with targeted legislative and funding actions. Specifically, we recommend:

- **Investing \$850 million in five-year capacity-building grants or contracts** (\$170 million/year) for government and community-based organizations to create system-level linkages needed to make HCBS more efficient and easy to navigate. Prioritize grants and contracts for culturally-specific CBOs that have a presence and trust connection to the communities being served.
- **Creating a \$2 billion fund for services that cannot be billed to Medicaid HCBS** to make it easier for providers to deliver a more comprehensive suite of patient-centered support services.
- **Requiring every Medicaid state plan to center racial equity** in program design and outcome/impact measures to increase the likelihood that quality services reach historically underserved and unserved populations.

- **Passing the Home and Community-Based Services Access Act** introduced by Rep. Dingell which would make HCBS a mandatory service under Medicaid.
- **Requiring universal screening for housing instability and providing housing support services, as needed**, for anyone who is applying for or receiving HCBS. This is a ‘no wrong door’ access to services that could prevent or mitigate homelessness for those who may not be eligible for HCBS care services.

We thank you for working with the Administration to invest in families and communities and look forward to the transformational changes that are coming.